Steps taken by the Government to promote software industry includes liberalisation of industrial policy and streamlining of procedures, provision of fiscal incentives like reduction of custom duty on import of computer hardware and zero duty on softyware, incometax concessions on exports, strengthening of manpower development programme, improvement of quality assurance practices, strengthening of infrastructural facilities through setting up of Software Technology Parks, launching of export promotion campaigns and Business Support Centre (in USA), protection of software IPR, stimulation of R&D efforts and provision of Venture Capital funds.

(c) and (d) Efforts are being made to extend the benefits of the Information Technology in all parts of the country by upgrading the existing STD/ISD/ PCOs to serve as Public Tele-Info Centres (PTICs).

It is proposed to set up Software Technology Parks in all the States. A distance learning programme is being taken up to increase the reach of IT and IT-enabled education in all the regions.

A project has also been launched to set up Community Information Centres at block level in all the North Eastern States including Sikkim to facilitate e-mail, access to internet and computer related training.

Setting up of Information Technology Research Centres

3590. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry propose to set up Information Technology Research Centres in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the facilities therein;

(c) by when these centres would be set up;

(d) whether the centres are being set up according to some parameters; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) There is no such proposal under consideration of the Government.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.